



Water System Advisory Committee (WSAC)
September 12, 2018 Meeting Notes
Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 Fifth Avenue
Room 4901
5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Committee Members	Present?	SPU Staff & Guests	Role
Joel Carsley	Y	Natasha Walker	CAC Program Coordinator
Steven Cole	Y	Kathy Curry	Water System Policy Liaison
Paul Reed	Y	Sheryl Shapiro	CAC Program Manager
Rodney Schauf	Y	Alex Chen	Division Director, Water Planning and Program Management
Teresa Stern	Y	Kelly O'Rourke	SPU Water Conservation Manager
Michael Godfried	Y		
Kat Dej-Panah	N	Guest	
Wendy Walker	N		
Ky Lewis	N		
Annie Saunders	Y		

1. Regular Business

- WSAC Chair, Rodney Schauf, opened the meeting at 5:38 PM.
- Meeting notes from August were reviewed and approved.
- Rodney indicated emergency exits and exit procedures.

2. CAC Program Updates

- **Fall WSAC Meeting Schedule:** October meeting is cancelled. We will have an October 24 All-CAC meeting, and will return for our regular WSAC meeting in November. The October 24 meeting will be focused on SPU Risk and Resiliency.
- **The CDWAC meeting & Ballard RainWise tour was rescheduled to Wednesday, September 26.** Sheryl provided an overview of the RainWise Program for members to consider joining. We will be meeting at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Ballard.
- **2019 Workplanning:** In November we will begin discussing topics we hope to cover in 2019. Information will be sent in advance. There will be an opportunity to reflect back on the year in December as well.
- **Member Update:** Wendy Walker, WSAC Member, is on leave for 3 months beginning in September, and out again in 2019 for three months. Sheryl is currently recruiting members; the new recruitment flyer was distributed to WSAC members.

3. WSAC & the 2019 Water System Plan (WSP)

WSAC Members watched the public comment provided by WSAC Chairs at the Seattle City Council Civil Rights, Utilities, Economic Development & Arts (CRUEDA) Committee meeting on 9/11/2018 on the 2019 Water System Plan (WSP). Following the public comment, WSAC Vice Chair, Joel Carsley, sent an email to CRUEDA, City Council and SPU General Manager Mami Hara with the letter.

Members were encouraged to watch SPU Joan Kersnar's presentation to the CRUEDA committee on the WSP. During the presentation, the CRUEDA committee referenced back to the WSAC letter on how the Plan deals with the focus areas WSAC members identified. **A link to that presentation. :**

<https://www.seattlechannel.org/mayor-and-council/city-council/2018/2019-civil-rights-utilities-economic-development-and-arts-committee?videoid=x98410>

Members thanked one another for their efforts, and WSAC Chair Rodney Schauf shared that it was an honor to deliver the comments.

4. Regional Water Conservation Program

Kelly O'Rourke, SPU Water Conservation Manager provided a status update on developing the 2019-2028 Regional Water Conservation Program. This included strategic direction given by the Water Operating Board in 2017 and work with Conservation Technical Forum throughout 2018 to prioritize program modifications. The Operating Board consists of management-level staff at the wholesale waters customers, while the Conservation Technical Forum consists of their program-level staff.

O'Rourke revisited the past WSAC meetings on the topic: April 2017 (Joint CDWAC-WSAC Meeting), and February 2018 (WSAC only). Feedback from these meetings was used in the exercises brought to the Water Operating Board in 2017 and Conservation Technical Forum in 2018.

O'Rourke shared that the strategic direction of the Operating Board and the outcome(s) of the prioritization exercises with the Conservation Technical Forum aligned well with the input WSAC provided during their two meetings on this topic. The main thrust is to increase education, outreach, and technical assistance work, while reducing (but not eliminating) rebates.

Members were encouraged to provide feedback on the list of items for areas they are interested in and may want to include in **our discussions around 2019 work planning.**

- **A CAC member** asked if the SavingWater.org website has a regional focus, and whether SPU builds and/or operates the content of the site. Staff responded that it is managed by SPU for the region, and that improving the content and reach of the website is a high priority for the new program efforts. They said it is considered a clearinghouse for our customers, and that it's a .org because it is intended to serve both SPU and 18 wholesale water customers. This includes individual cities, but it also includes water districts that may provide water to multiple jurisdictions.

- **A CAC member** asked about the reasons for the shift from rebates to more education. Staff explained that one reason was SPU has sufficient water supply for the near term and that the program will put increased emphasis on efforts that help with long-term supply needs (such as education) and decrease emphasis on efforts that relate to short-term supply needs (such as rebates). Another reason was to help maintain a conservation ethic in the region, especially given the influx of new residents who may not have a strong conservation ethic.
 - **A CAC member** responded that while education is important, they wanted to remind SPU that some residents may rely on rebates and so suggested that they remain available. Staff clarified that rebates are still being provided, but that there is now more education focus than there was previously.
 - **A CAC Member** responded that the building code requirements and manufacturing trends may be reducing the need for rebates, given that updates and new construction generally involve low-flow toilets and water conserving appliances.
 - **A CAC member** recalled a past WSAC discussion on cost benefit ratios for rebate programs. They felt future programs should be examined for water savings relative to the cost of the Program. Staff responded that they agreed and explained that cost-effectiveness is built into all the rebate programs. Cost-effectiveness is harder to gauge for education and outreach efforts.
- **A CAC Member** asked whether different districts/municipalities who participate in the Operating Board and/or Conservation Technical Forum gravitate towards some program elements over others. Staff responded that yes, there are some differences and explained that the details shown with the prioritization process will highlight the diversity of interests across the water utilities.
 - **[After seeing the prioritized results] A CAC Member** asked if needs could be met for those who didn't meet the majority opinion? I.e. How can SPU address if small municipalities or jurisdictions have unique Conservation Program needs. Staff explained that even though the Program elements are available for all, individual partners can amplify the areas of the Program that are relevant to their community. For example, not all municipalities promote the toilet rebates.
- **A CAC Member** asked how the funding for these programs gets spent. Staff responded that the program is managed as a whole. It is not the intent to track incoming dollars from each water utility and try to ensure they get the exact same amount of conservation programming in their service area. The conservation goal is a regional goal and does not specify programming or water savings levels from each water utility. Wholesale partners pay in as part of their wholesale rate and facility charges, and they get access to all water conservation programming. Some partners are more active, and some Programs are more popular. For example, for the youth education programs, an allocation goal for each water utility is determined based on the proportion of their schools in the entire service. However, actual program registration is based on teacher demand.

5. Water 101 & Water Supply Update

Alex Chen, Division Director, Water Planning and Program Management provided an overview of the SPU Water Line of Business. For some members, this was a revisit of topics discussed in March 2017 during a Joint CDWAC-WSAC Water LOB orientation. Chen provided a history of the water service to Seattle, beginning with the Cedar River pipeline in the early 1900s. He provided an overview of the flow of water into the region, the regional water distribution system, treatment processes, and ongoing and upcoming challenges. Chen then provided a second annual Water Supply Update, describing SPU's dry season water supply management. Members were encouraged to provide feedback on the water supply conditions website: <http://www.seattle.gov/util/MyServices/Water/WaterSupply/index.htm>

- **A CAC Member** inquired about the similarities between San Francisco's water system and Seattle's. Staff responded that they are similar systems.
- **A CAC Member** asked what percentage of the flow do we use of the Cedar River versus what inflows into the Lake. Staff responded that it varies seasonally..
- **A CAC Member** asked if SPU is seeing changes to the treatment needs of the water supply. Staff responded that turbidity and sediment loads have remained consistent on average. The only potential trend is lower sediment load in the Tolt inflow.
- **A CAC Member** shared their concerns about drier summers and asked if there was concern about wildfires affecting the Tolt or Cedar Watersheds. Specifically, they inquired about the potential impact of increased sediment loads from wildfires. Staff responded that it was a great question, and something that SPU is looking at, especially in the context of climate change.
- **A CAC Member** shared that research has been released recently by the University of Washington's Forestry Department showing that forest fires on the west side of the Cascade Mountains are different than east side fires, and that east side forest management practices would not work on the west side. Staff responded that SPU reviews the latest science on wildfire analysis, to see what management suggestions they may have.
- **A CAC Member** shared that NPR released a segment on water supply in Mexico City. The inconsistent supply reminded them how lucky they feel to have access to dependable and high quality water. Staff responded that Mexico City's challenges are a fairly common problem around the world, and often reflect a lack of holistic planning over water resources. They also noted the challenges of water systems that are easily impacted by surface water pollution issues, such as those drawing from the Mississippi River.
- **A CAC Member** asked if information is exchanged formally between Cities/Public Utilities across the Nation. Staff shared that there a couple of national organizations that facilitate these conversations. One example is American Waterworks Association, who hosts a specialty conference for aging infrastructure once per year, as well as a specialty conference for utility management and for groundwater issues. These kinds of gatherings offer the opportunity to learn from the mistakes and replicate the successes of others.
- **A CAC Member** asked if there is a ranking among Cities for quality of water supply? Staff responded that there is not, and that rating water quality is complicated due to a variety of ways to analyze quality.

- **A CAC Member** shared about a recent experience in Colorado where local family members were doubting the water quality from the tap. The CAC Member said they were able to show them the City's Water Quality Report.
- **A CAC Member** shared about a recent forecast for a drier, warmer winter. The member inquired about the accuracy of that prediction. Staff responded that SPU works to balance the accuracy of long-term forecasting with daily water supply management.
- **A CAC Member** asked if a field trip to the water quality lab would be possible. Staff said yes, it would, and that they thought WSAC members may enjoy visiting the flavor profile panel, which meets every two weeks. Members discussed whether people from different parts of the Country may have different flavor palates.
- **A CAC Member** provided feedback on the water supply website, saying that they would prefer images or bullet points to break up the text.
 - **Another CAC Member** added that the water supply graph link should be emphasized more, possibly by increasing the text size.

6. Community Insights, Around the Table

- **A CAC Member** shared about the differences between "City water" in major metropolitan cities, comparing Boston to Vermont.
- **A CAC Member** shared about an upcoming Salmon-Safe event on Wednesday, 9/19, unveiling the Aurora Bridge bioswales. See email from WSAC Member, Teresa Stern.
- **A CAC Member** shared about a New York Times article today on lead in New York Public Schools pipes. More information to come on this.
- **A CAC Member** shared about the charity they work on; they provided water filters for two schools in Washington State (Dearborn International is one of them). They shared that they were feeling very fortunate to live in Seattle and have access to clean and plentiful water.
- A new CAC Program recruitment flyer has been developed; it was passed around for members.

Adjourned 7:40 PM